

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SY-05 SCCT-01 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 CIEP-01 FAA-00 SSM-03 SAJ-01 /098 W

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R 311422Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO /SECSTATE WASHDC 6577

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 11690

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS EG LY

SUBJ: GOE KEEPS LIBYA IN PUBLIC EYE

REF: CAIRO 11475

1. SUMMARY. EGYPTIANS ATTEMPTING SECURE RELEASE OF ARRESTED AIRPLANE SECURITY OFFICIALS WHILE PRESS CAMPAIGN KEEPS LIBYA IN PUBLIC EYE AND HARPS ON SOVIET CONNECTION. DIPLOMATIC SPECULATION ON GOE MILITARY INTENTIONS WIDESPREAD AND BEING ENCOURAGED BY SOVIET DIPLOMATS. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY SOURCE TELLS US EGYPTIAN SECURITY GUARDS ARRESTED AUGUST 25 IN LIBYA (REFTEL) WERE SEIZED ON PRETEXT THEIR NAMES
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NOT ON MANIFEST. EGYPTIANS NOTE, HOWEVER, GUARDS HAD NO

INTENTIONS OF LEAVING AIRPLANE. FAHMY ASSISTANT AL-BAZ SAYS EGYPTIANS DOING THEIR BEST TO SECURE RELEASE BUT MAKING NO PROGRESS YET. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING GOE HAS LITTLE POLITICAL LEVERAGE WITH LIBYA, HE THOUGHT EGYPTIAN TROOP CONCENTRATIONS MIGHT MAKE LARG COME TO ITS SENSES AND RELEASE MEN.

3. LATEST LIBYAN "CRIME" IS REPORTED QADHAFI ORDER PROHIBITING REFUELING OF EGYPTIAN AIRCRAFT AT TRIPOLI, BENGHAZI AND SABHA AIRPORTS. EGYPT AIR PLANES NOW FLYING WITH SUFFICIENT FUEL FOR RETURN FLIGHTS FROM LIBYAN AIRPORTS. THERE NO INDICATION AIR TRAFFIC WILL BE INTERRUPTED.

4. PAST LIBYAN "CRIMES" BEING KEPT BEFORE PUBLIC ALTHOUGH PAPERS HAVE LITTLE NEW TO ADD. TWO UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH ALEXANDRIA TRAIN BOMBING NOW "UNDERGOING QUESTIONING" WHILE MILITARY PROSECUTOR HAS ANNOUNCED BILL OF INDICTMENT ON SIX ACCUSED IN HIJACKING CASE WILL BE PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 2.

5. EGYPTIANS UNLEASHED FORMER RCC MEMBER MUHAYSHI ONCE AGAIN FOR CALL ON LIBYANS TO PUT END TO QADHAFI RULE, CITING HIS "HORRIBLE CRIMES" AGAINST ARAB WORLD. APPEAL CAME ON NEW PROGRAM, "VOICE OF LIBYAN PEOPLE".

6. QADHAFI-SOVIET CONNECTION ALSO PLAYED UP IN RESPONSE TO AUGUST 30 PRAVDA ARTICLE WHICH ATTACKED EGYPT AND "DEFENDED QADHAFI SABOTAGE." AL-AHRAM EDITORIAL CALLED ARTICLE "GRAVE PRONOUNCEMENT" BECAUSE IT SHOWS OPEN KREMLIN SUPPORT OF QADHAFI. PAPER ASKED RHETORICALLY WHETHER LIBYA NOW A SOVIET PROTECTORATE. PRESS NOTED DISAPPROVINGLY REPORT THAT SOVIET DELEGATION LED BY AUTUR VADIR, "VICE PRESIDENT OF PRESIDUM OF SUPREME SOVIET". WILL VISIT LIBYA FOR CELEBRATION OF 7TH ANNIVERSARY OF LIBYAN REVOLUTION.

7. COMMENT: GOE INTENTIONS TOWARD LIBYA HAVE BECOME NUMBER ONE TOPIC OF SPECULATION IN DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY. THERE ARE WIDESPREAD RUMORS THAT EGYPTIAN MILITARY FORCE ON WESTERN BORDER IS GROWING TO 20,000-30,000 TROOPS. SOVIET CHARGE AKOPOV TOLD ONE COLLEAGUE HE THOUGHT FORCE HAD REACHED 32,000. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, SOVIET DIPLOMATS ALSO CONFIDENTIAL

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SUGGEST RECENT HIJACKING WAS STAGED BY EGYPTIAN INTELLIGENCE AS PRETEXT FOR MILITARY ACTION. AUGUST 30 PRAVDA ARTICLE APPEARS TO BE FIRST PUBLIC SIGN AT LEAST SOVIET MORAL SUPPORT FOR LIBYA IN ITS CONFLICT WITH EGYPT (MOSCOW 13672) EILTS

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